

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-7, 9-15, and 17-22 are currently pending in the present application, with Claims 1, 11, 15, 17, and 19 being amended. Reconsideration and reexamination of the claims are respectfully requested.

The Examiner rejected Claims 1, 11, 15, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bizjak (U.S. Patent No. 7,212,640). This rejection is respectfully traversed with respect to the amended claims.

As previously communicated, and again repeated herein for the Examiner's reference, the present invention is directed to a method of adjusting levels of amplifiers in a multi-input channel audio system. Specifically, the recited method allows a user to separates the multi-channels into one or more groups of channels so as to provide the ability to process certain channels while isolating certain other channels from the processing. Each group is analyzed to detect a maximal signal level (from one of the input channels), and, in accordance with the detected maximal signal level, appropriate amplification gain of the input audio signals for that group is adjusted.

As also previously explained, the amplification gain as recited in the claims corresponds to the multiplier signal as disclosed in the specification. For instance, as the Examiner pointed out, paragraph [0061] of the published application (U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2004/0008851 A1) provides that numeral "70" denotes a gain control unit that determines a multiplier gain (i.e., a multiplier signal) using the maximum value as an input level according to a characteristic curve such as shown in Fig. 4.

Applicants have further amended the independent claims to clarify that the three or more channels of audio signals, as recited in the preamble, constitute a set of surround signals in a

surround system. Furthermore, the claims have been amended to require that, should the groups arrangement process arranges plural channels into plural groups, the groupings of the channels are different as between any given two of the grouping types. This aspect of the invention is disclosed, *inter alia*, at paragraph [0024] of the published publication of the present application. For instance, as described in paragraph [0024], KEY_LINK1, KEY_LINK2, KEY_LINK3, and KEY_LINK4 correspond to different grouping types (as specifically recited in Claims 3, 4, 5, and 6, respectively. In particular, KEY_LINK1 is a grouping of all of the 5.1 channels (i.e., L+R+LS+RS+C+LFE), KEY_LINK2 groups together all of the channels except the LFE channel, KEY_LINK3 groups together the front channels (i.e., L+R+C) for one subgroup and the rear channels (LS+RS) for another subgroup, and KEY_LINK4 isolated the center channel and groups the front and rear stereo channels into two separate subgroups. Dividing the surround channel signals into different groups according to grouping types provide the flexibility of selectively control the gain of a desired set of channels, such as the center channel, the front channels, the rear surround channels, etc.

Bizjak does not contain any disclosure or suggestion of a group arrangement section that arranges plural audio channels into two or more groups according to the selected grouping type, such that the groupings of the channels are different as between any given two of the grouping types (as recited in the amended claims).

Bizjak discloses an audio apparatus for inputting signals of plural channels from plural sources, in which channels from one particular source is selected as one group, and the gain of the signals of the channels from a single source is commonly controlled. Bizjak does not teach or suggest dividing plural channels (that constitute surround channel signals) into a plurality of different groups. Rather, as disclosed at col. 30, lines 50-59 of Bizjak, an input “group” in Bizjak

refers to one or more channels provided by the selected input or inputs (e.g., AV apparatus, CD, etc.). On the other hand, the present application as recited in the claims define a “group” as grouping of a given set of surround audio channels, not channels from a source of a single input (as in Bizjak). Furthermore, Bizjak does not teach or suggest the inventive feature of selecting a particular grouping type from a plurality of grouping types, and dividing signals into different groups according to the selecting grouping type. In fact, Bizjak does not disclose at all the concept of grouping type and hence cannot offer the advantages of the present invention.

Accordingly, in view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1, 11, 15, and 19 are not anticipated by, nor obvious in view of, Bizjak.

The Examiner rejected Claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bizjak in view of Wiser et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,363,093). This rejection is respectfully traversed with respect to the amended claim.

As discussed above, Bizjak does not contain any disclosure or suggestion of a group arrangement section that arranges plural audio channels into two or more groups according to the selected grouping type, such that the groupings of the channels are different as between any given two of the grouping types (as recited in amended Claim 17).

Wiser fails to make for this deficiency of Bizjak. As the Examiner indicated, Wiser discloses a GUI in an audio processor. Wiser does not contain any disclosure or suggestion of grouping of surround audio channels. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 17 is not obvious in view of Bizjak and Wiser, for at least the same reasons already provided above.

In view of the above, Applicant submits that each of the presently pending claims of the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact

the undersigned attorney at anytime with any further questions or clarifications regarding the claimed subject matter.

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 393032038900. However, the Assistant Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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